

# KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH

## Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly

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Kelly Cooper, Assembly President  
Wayne Ogle, Vice President

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### MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Kelly Cooper, Assembly President  
Members, Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly

**FROM:** Kelly Cooper, Assembly President *[Signature] for: KC*

**DATE:** December 22, 2016

**SUBJECT:** Resolution 2017-006, Amending the Assembly Policy Regarding Invocations before Borough Assembly Meetings (Cooper)

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The invocation guidelines adopted in resolution 2016-56, for the first time in the borough's history, limit who may give invocations to the borough assembly. This has sparked a difficult controversy in the borough, now culminating in a lawsuit. Even if we win this lawsuit, in my view this policy preventing individuals who aren't either a chaplain or from a religious association with an established presence in the borough from giving invocations, will continue to cause division and negative feelings among our residents. We also may be subject to other litigation as more cases are decided across the country.

This resolution amends the invocation policy to be more inclusive, allowing speakers from a broader spectrum to reflect the broad diversity of beliefs among the people of the borough. It also adds the request that invocations be free from personal political views, sectarian controversies, and absent any apologies for others.

Additionally, the amendments include some administrative provisions including the means for submitting written requests to the borough clerk's office. It limits speakers to offer no more than three invocations in any calendar year to help ensure the opportunity is available for a variety of speakers to be scheduled for invocations. Finally, this includes a recommendation that invocations be not more than three minutes long, which is consistent with the time-period allowed for public comments.

Your support would be appreciated.